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## Frequently Asked Questions

*Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman*

### When and how can the Ombudsman help?

#### The Ombudsman may be able to help if:

- You are experiencing a problem with your application or petition that you have not been able to resolve with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
- You are facing an emergency or a hardship caused by an error or USCIS delay.
- Your application or petition is pending past USCIS processing times.

#### The Ombudsman cannot help if:

- You are seeking legal advice. The Ombudsman does not provide legal advice.
- You are seeking assistance with an issue that does not involve USCIS. The Ombudsman's authority is limited to assisting with problems that relate to USCIS applications, petitions, or services.

**\* NOTE:** While the Ombudsman provides impartial and independent recommendations to USCIS on how to resolve problems, we do not have the authority to change USCIS decisions.

### How do I submit a Request for Assistance to the Ombudsman?

- Submit requests for assistance [online using DHS Form-7001](#).
- Please electronically attach relevant documentation you received from USCIS or other government entity that are related to your request for assistance.
- If you feel that a particular item does not apply, please indicate by writing N/A.
- Do not send original applications or original documents.

**Note:** Any files greater than 5MB in size will be rejected (a 60 page PDF document equals approximately 5MB). In addition, the total size for all files for each request cannot exceed 5MB in size.

### What information do I need to provide with my request for assistance?

- The Ombudsman requires that you try to resolve your problem directly with USCIS by:
  - ✓ Visiting [USCIS My Case Status](#); and
  - ✓ Contacting the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283; or
  - ✓ Attending a USCIS [InfoPass](#) Appointment



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- Please provide in Section 11 (Prior Actions Taken) the following information with your request for assistance:
  - If you contacted the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 – include:
    - The **date, time and phone number** used to make your call;
    - The **response** you were provided; and
    - The **SRMT number**, if you were issued one.
  - If you attended an InfoPass Appointment with USCIS – include:
    - The **location** of the office you contacted;
    - The **date** of your visit;
    - The Information Service Officer's name, if provided; and
      - The **response** that USCIS provided.
- Please include all relevant USCIS receipt numbers and copies of important information and documentation, such as Form I-797, *Notice of Action*.

\*Note: Please click "Please Describe" in Section 11 to enter this information.

Please see the [Instructions for the DHS Form-7001](#).

### Who may prepare and submit a request for assistance?

Individuals and employers, as well as attorneys and accredited representatives, may submit a request. Organizations may help complete the request for case assistance, but consent from the applicant or petitioner must be provided. Please note when entering the name of the person encountering difficulties with USCIS, please list the name of the petitioner or applicant, and not the beneficiary, attorney, or accredited representative.

### Who may sign a request for assistance?

The Ombudsman must ensure appropriate consent for each request for case assistance. Beneficiaries must receive a signature from petitioners, and attorneys and accredited representatives must include a copy of Form G-28, *Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative* previously filed with USCIS. A request submitted without proper consent will be treated as an incomplete submission. Our office understands that there are always exceptional circumstances that require special attention. Please contact us at [cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) if you require special assistance.

### Is there a fee for submitting a request for case assistance with the Ombudsman?

No. There is no charge for the Ombudsman's services.

### How does an Ombudsman differ from a lawyer?



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An Ombudsman maintains neutrality and impartiality, while a lawyer advocates for his or her client. Though some Ombudsmen may be trained lawyers, Ombudsmen do not provide legal advice.

### **Can the Ombudsman provide legal advice?**

The Ombudsman does not provide legal advice or serve as a substitute for legal options, such as appeals. The Ombudsman does not adjudicate immigration applications or petitions, or reverse adverse decisions issued by USCIS.

### **When should I contact the Ombudsman office for assistance?**

The Ombudsman assists individuals and employers in resolving problems with USCIS. Before contacting the Ombudsman, review the matter carefully to ensure that your immigration case is before USCIS try to resolve the problem directly with USCIS. For cases that are pending before other Department of Homeland Security or government offices, please contact those offices directly:

- [U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#)
- [Immigration Courts](#) and the [Board of Immigration Appeals \(BIA\)](#)
- [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Community Outreach \(ICE ERO\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- [National Visa Center \(NVC\)](#)
- [Department of State](#)
- [U.S. Embassies and Consulates](#)
- [DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties](#)

### **How do I submit a request for assistance as an attorney or accredited representative?**

Attorneys and accredited representative may submit requests for case assistance through the [Ombudsman Case Assistance Online website](#). You must upload a copy of a properly executed Form G-28 or a copy of the Form G-28 that was previously submitted to USCIS. Requests for assistance that do not contain a copy of the required Form G-28 will be treated as incomplete, which will delay our efforts to assist.

### **What do I need to provide with my request for case assistance?**

Please include all receipt numbers from USCIS for the relevant application and/or petition in question, as well as copies of the key documents, such as forms submitted and any correspondence to and from USCIS.



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**Note:** Copies of exhibits that were filed with USCIS should not be submitted at this stage.

### **What happens after I submit a request to the Ombudsman?**

Online requests will automatically receive a confirmation with a case number. Subsequently, an email acknowledging receipt of the submission will be sent to the email address provided. In all matters, the Ombudsman will conduct an initial check to ensure proper consent was provided and that all necessary information to process the case has been submitted.

The Ombudsman **reviews all incoming requests for case assistance within 30 calendar days, and takes action to resolve 90 percent of case-related inquiries submitted to the office within 90 days** of receipt. USCIS then has 45 days to respond to the Ombudsman's inquiry. If you have not received notice that we have taken action to your resolve your case within 90 days from submission of your request, please follow up by emailing [cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov).

### **What if my case requires immediate action?**

The Ombudsman will expedite case assistance processing based on the following criteria: severe financial loss to company or individual; extreme emergent situation; humanitarian situation; cultural and social interest of the United States; national interest; service error; or compelling USCIS interest. If your case requires urgent action, please call the Ombudsman at 202-357-8100 or 1-855-882-8100 or email [cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) (please be sure to include your Ombudsman case number with your email). The Ombudsman will make every effort to expedite a review of your case, if appropriate.

### **From whom is information collected and why?**

The Ombudsman collects information to carry out its mandate under Section 452 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to assist individuals and employers in resolving problems with USCIS.

### **What specific legal authorities define the collection of information?**

The legal authorities that define this collection of information are provided in the Homeland Security Acts of 2002, Pub. Law (2002), 6 U.S.C §452 et seq.; Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973



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## Immigration Questions

### **Where can I find information about what I need to enter the United States?**

Information on admission into the United States, including [entry requirements, immigration or customs inspection](#), or other border crossing issues, can be obtained from [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#) (CBP).

### **How can I correct my I-94 or prove that I left the United States?**

To [correct an I-94](#), *Arrival Departure document* received upon admission to the United States at an airport or land border, consult a port maintained by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). If USCIS issued Form I-94 (at a local [USCIS office or from a USCIS Service Center](#)) and it has an error, go to a USCIS local office and request a new Form I-94. If the officer at the local office believes the I-94 document was not issued in error, you may be advised to file [Form I-102 – Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival Departure Document](#).

### **What do I do if my Form I-94 has been lost, stolen, mutilated or destroyed?**

Contact USCIS at 1-800-375-5283 and apply for a replacement Form I-94 by filing [Form I-102 – Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival Departure Document](#).

### **Where can I find information about Visas?**

The U.S. Department of State provides [information regarding visa processing](#), and each U.S. Embassy in the country where you have filed or intend to file a visa application provides additional information on local processes. You may contact the U.S. Department of State's Visa Services Public Inquiries Branch at 202-663-1225.

### **I am a frequent traveler to the United States, is there a document that allows expedited travel approval?**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection's [Trusted Traveler Programs](#) provides expedited travel for pre-approved, low risk travelers through dedicated lanes and kiosks.

### **How can I address difficulties that I have experienced while traveling?**

The DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program ([DHS TRIP](#)) is a single point of contact for individuals who have inquires or seek resolution regarding difficulties they experienced during their travel screening at entry ports, airports, train stations or crossing the U.S. borders.



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**How can I find a person who is being detained by immigration officials?**

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), provides an [online locator](#) that identifies individuals who are currently detained by immigration officials. ICE Community Relations also provides information related to deportation and removal proceeding. You may also contact the [ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Field Office](#) in your area.

**Where can I find more government information on immigration questions?**

The USCIS website provides additional resources on [General Immigration](#), [Employment-Based Immigration](#) and [Humanitarian-Based Immigration](#).